

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of locating rights associated with a media property, the method comprising:

defining a first rights characteristic;

5 defining a first hierarchy having a first set nodes with corresponding rights characteristics values for the first rights characteristic;

identifying ancestors and decedents within the first set of nodes;

assigning node identifiers to the first set nodes;

10 identifying a first set of rights for a first property, the first set of rights corresponding to at least a portion of the first set nodes; and

retrieving rights related information using a joining of the first set of rights and the first hierarchy.

2. The method as defined in Claim 1, wherein the first set of rights includes at least a first rights exclusion.

15 3. The method as defined in Claim 1, wherein the first set of rights includes an indication for a first right in the first set of rights indicating that the first right is available for licensing.

20 4. The method as defined in Claim 1, further comprising identifying a second set of rights for a second property, the second set of rights corresponding to at least a second portion of the first set nodes.

5. The method as defined in Claim 1, wherein the first set of rights includes a language right, a territory right, and a media right.

6. The method as defined in Claim 1, wherein the first rights characteristic is one of media rights, territory rights, language rights, and term rights.

25 7. The method as defined in Claim 1, wherein the rights characteristics values include "Worldwide" and "Europe."

8. The method as defined in Claim 1, further comprising assigning a label to the first hierarchy.

30 9. The method as defined in Claim 1, wherein the first set of nodes includes a worldwide node at a first level, a first continent node and a second continent node at a second level, and a first country node and a second country node at a third level,

wherein the first level is an ancestor to the second level, and the second level is an ancestor to the third level.

10. The method as defined in Claim 1, wherein the first set of nodes includes an all languages node at a first level, and a first language node and a second language node at a second level, wherein the first level is an ancestor to the second level.

11. The method as defined in Claim 1, wherein the first set of nodes includes an all media node at a first level, and a first media-type node and a second media-type node at a second level, wherein the first level is an ancestor to the second level.

12. The method as defined in Claim 1, further comprising:

defining a second rights characteristic; and

defining a second hierarchy having a second set nodes with corresponding rights characteristics values for the second rights characteristic.

13. The method as defined in Claim 12, wherein the first rights characteristic is territory and the second rights characteristic relates to a time period.

14. The method as defined in Claim 12, wherein the first hierarchy and the second hierarchy are defined at least in part by a licensor of the first property.

15. The method as defined in Claim 1, further comprising a second hierarchy having a second set of nodes ordered differently then the first set of nodes, wherein the second set of nodes have corresponding rights characteristics values that include at least a portion of the rights characteristics values corresponding to the first set of nodes.

16. A method of locating rights associated with a media property, the method comprising:

defining a first set of rights characteristics;

assigning rights characteristics values to the first set of rights characteristics;

associating a first portion of the first set of rights characteristics with a first hierarchy having a first set of nodes;

associating a second portion of the first set of rights characteristics with a second hierarchy having a second set of nodes;

identifying generational relationships for the first set of nodes of the first hierarchy;

identifying generational relationships for the second set of nodes of the second hierarchy;

5 defining a first set of rights, the first set of rights corresponding to at least a first portion of at least one of the first set of nodes and the second set of nodes;

associating the first set of rights with a first media property;

10 defining a second set of rights, the second set of rights corresponding to at least a second portion of at least one of the first set of nodes and the second set of nodes;

associating the second set of rights with a second media property;

15 determining available rights for the first media property in response to a first user request from a user by navigating the at least one of the first and second hierarchies defined in the first set of rights; and

determining available rights for the second media property in response to a second user request by navigating the at least one of the first and second hierarchies defined in the second set of rights.

20 17. The method as defined in Claim 16, wherein the user is a rights licensor.

18. The method as defined in Claim 16, wherein the user is a rights licensee.

19. The method as defined in Claim 16, further comprising:

joining the first set of rights characteristics with the first hierarchy; and

joining the second set of rights characteristics with the second hierarchy.

25 20. The method as defined in Claim 16, wherein the first user request includes a license request for a first media in a first territory, in a first language.

21. The method as defined in Claim 16, wherein the second user request includes a license request for a first media in a first territory.

22. The method as defined in Claim 16, wherein the first user request includes a license request for a first media in a first language.

30 23. The method as defined in Claim 16, further comprising:

in response to the first user request, retrieving descendents for a first node in the first hierarchy to generate a first result;

in response to the first user request, retrieving the descendents for a second node in the second hierarchy to generate a second result;

5 combining the first result and the second result into a first data set; and
querying the first set of data to determine if a first requested right is available.

24. The method as defined in Claim 16, further comprising associating a third set of rights with the first media property.

10 25. A method for managing rights associated with a first media, the method comprising:

receiving a specification of a general level of rights owned by a first intellectual property rights owner;

receiving a query for a lower level right that is a descendent of at least one of the general level of rights; and

15 determining if the lower level rights is available for licensing by forming at least a first implicit relationship between the general level of rights owned, and a general level of rights licensed out.

20 26. The method as defined in Claim 25, the method further comprising generating a hierarchical data structure including the general level of rights and the lower of level of rights.

27. The method as defined in Claim 25, wherein the general level of rights relates to a relatively larger time period then the lower level of rights.

28. The method as defined in Claim 25, wherein the general level of rights relates to a relatively larger geographical area then the lower level of rights.

25 29. The method as defined in Claim 25, wherein the general level of rights relates to a relatively larger number of languages then the lower level of rights.

30. An apparatus for managing rights associated with a first media property, the apparatus comprising:

30 a first instruction stored in computer readable memory, the first instruction configured to receive a specification of a general level of rights owned by a first intellectual property rights owner;

a second instruction stored in computer readable memory, the second instruction configured to receive a query for a lower level right that is a descendent of at least one of the general level of rights; and

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a third instruction stored in computer readable memory, the third instruction configured to determine if the lower level rights is available for licensing by forming at least a first implicit relationship between the general level of rights owned, and a general level of rights licensed out.